Northern Shillukland and southern Shillukland are the arches of the politico-religious kingdom of the Shilluk of which the kingship is the keystone. That segmentation has taken this particular form is doubtless due to the peculiar ribbon-distribution of the Shilluk settlements. 631 [361]

The whole Shilluk people recognize a single head and we can therefore speak of the Shilluk nation and of their king, and it is with his place in the national polity that this lecture is particularly concerned. According to Shilluk tradition the present king is the thirty-first of his line. All the kings are believed to be descended from Nyikang, the leader of the Shilluk in their heroic age, who led them into their present homeland, conquering it from its inhabitants and dividing it among the lineages of his followers; and Nyikang, or, as we would say, the spirit of Nyikang, is believed to be in every king and to have passed from king to king down the line of his successors. Nyikang is thus a mythological personification of the timeless kingship which itself symbolizes the national structure, a changeless moral order. 643 173 [775]

The rule of succession is that only a son of a king can be invested with the kingship. As many sons of kings have never succeeded to the throne, there 644 565 614

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631 particular, ceremonial services at the king's investi-
778 ture, the building of huts at Fashoda, which is both the royal capital and the cult centre of Nyikang, and the upkeep of Nyikang's other shrines and
182 those of past kings. These shrines are widely dis-
778 tributed throughout the country so that every
[794] section of it participates in the cult of Nyikang, who is, it must be borne in mind, not only the semi-divine hero of Shilluk mythology but also the king at every period of their history. Indeed, the shrines of Nyikang, what Professor Seligman calls his cenotaphs, are indistinguishable from the tomb-shrines of dead kings and they have the same ceremonial functions in the life of the people: in the rain-making ceremonies, at harvest time, and
182 in times of sickness and pestilence.[1] The religion
643 and cosmogony of the Shilluk are bound up with the political system through the identification of Nyikang with the king. The kingship stands at the centre of Shilluk moral values.

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[771] We can only understand the place of the kingship in Shilluk society when we realize that it is not the
776] individual at any time reigning who is king, but

[1] Prof. C. G. Seligman, 'The Cult of Nyakang and the Divine Kings of the Shilluk', *Report of the Wellcome Tropical Research Laboratories* (1911), pp. 221 and 225.

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Nyikang who is the medium between man and God (*Juok*) and is believed in some way to participate in God as he does in the king. 'Nyikang is the *reth* but the *reth* is not Nyikang.'[1] The participation of Nyikang in the king raises the kingship to a plane above all sectional interests, whether local or of descent. All the Shilluk share in the kingship, however their loyalties may pull them apart in other matters, because in Nyikang are centred all those interests which are common to all the people: success in war against foreigners and the fertility and health of men, cattle, crops, and of those wild beasts which are of service to man. Professor Westermann tells us that 'everything they value most in their national and private life, has its origin in him'.[2] Mr Howell and Mr Thomson tell us that when a king dies the Shilluk say '*piny bugon*', 'there is no land'[3]—the centre of the Shilluks' world has fallen out. It is restored by the investiture of a new king, for though kings may perish the kingship, that is Nyikang, endures. Mr Oyler tells us: 'They say that if Nikawng should die, the whole Shilluk race would perish.'[4]

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[1] Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 8. [2] *Op. cit.* p. xliii.
[3] Howell and Thomson, *op. cit.* p. 18.
[4] Rev. D. S. Oyler, 'Nikawng and the Shilluk Migration', *S.N. and R.* (1918), p. 115.

shrine of Akurwa to the Nyikang of the king in Fashoda. The king is now reverenced and the effigy is sent back to Akurwa. 643 775

It is Nyikang, mark you, the symbol of the whole Shilluk people, who is the king-maker. The kingship belongs to all the people and not to the royal clan. Indeed, I think it significant that when Nyikang captures the king-elect the latter is ostentatiously surrounded by a block of his own clan. In this connection it is to be hoped that more will be learnt about the distribution now and in the past of the royal clan. The traditional home of Nyikang was Fanyikang, a settlement in the south, and the ritual equivalent to the southern half of the kingdom is Gol Nyikang. It seems likely on these, and on other, grounds that the royal clan was at one time found chiefly, perhaps only, in the south and spread from there to those northern settlements in which it is found to-day, as has happened among the closely related Anuak people. Hence in the ceremonies of investiture it seems as though the Shilluk people, represented by Nyikang and the army of the north, capture the king and take him away from his clan, represented by the army of the south, to be the head of the whole nation. The ritual of investiture appears to be an 643 644 614 [173] [174]

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Juok, "May Juok guard you," while a sick man may cry, *Er ra Juok*, "Why, oh Juok?"; but on the whole, Juok is so linked with Nyakang in the Shilluk mind that he is seldom approached in prayer without the mention of Nyakang (and sometimes of his son Dag). Indeed so obvious is this association that the Rev. D. S. Oyler writes: "They never pray to God without invoking an intercessor," [1] and gives the following prayer as an example:—

> "We praise you, you who are God. Protect us, we are in your hands, and protect us, save me. You and Nikawng you are the ones who created, people are in your hands, and it is you Nikawng, who are accustomed to assist God to save, and it is you who give the rain. The sun is yours, and the river is yours, you who are Nikawng. You came from under the sun, you and your father, you two saved the earth, and your son Dok, you subdued all the peoples. The cow (for sacrifice) is here for you, and the blood will go to God and you . . ." [2]

We do not know of any definite evidence of sacrifice to Juok only; even in the all-important sacrifice for rain Nyakang is also invoked. Juok, vaguely associated with the firmament, is recognized as the creator, though now showing but little interest in his creatures. The prayers offered directly to him, collected by Hofmayr, are such dance songs as the following (we have paraphrased Hofmayr's literal translations):—

> "I pray to God (Juok), God the Giver (Juokatang), God the Protector (Juokagim); I have taken [God] to me and have become fearful to my enemies so that they scarcely dare attack me." "The Shilluk when satiated chatter like crows, they forget Juok; the Shilluk full of beer forget Juok." And a song composed by King Yor: "I pray to Juok alone for he directs the spears, spear thrusts are of Juok." [3]

Two subsidiary uses of the word Juok may be mentioned. There is an expression *pan Juok*, "the country of Juok". We formed the opinion that though this implied no local habitation it was vaguely associated with the dead; Hofmayr is more definite, regarding *pan Juok* as the place of Nyakang and the ancestors, to be reached after many months journeying in the bush. Certain diseases may in a general way be described as *juok* (though each has its own name), this term also being applied in folk-tales to men possessing supernormal attributes. Summing up, we may say that Juok is the Creator, perhaps vaguely associated with the firmament, but certainly having

[1] "Nikawng's Place in the Shilluk Religion": *S.N. & R.*, i, 1918, 283.
[2] Loc. cit. [3] Op. cit., 197–201.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

classes of people, animals, and even things, in which Nyakang may be immanent or with which he is associated.

The chief incarnations and manifestations of Nyakang are as follows:—

1. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as closely associated with certain shrines, which are in fact cenotaphs, for though spoken of as his tombs it is well known that he is not buried in any of them.

2. Each Shilluk king incarnates the spirit of Nyakang.

3. This is equally true of certain animals, and may possibly apply to all the members of particular species, as it certainly does to individual members.

4. The spirit of Nyakang is regarded as being present, at any rate at certain times, in his wooden effigy kept at Akurwa.

There are ten cenotaph "tombs" of Nyakang (*kengo Nyakang*) in the Shilluk country, the most important being at Akurwa and Fenikang. Each shrine consists of a group of two or more huts—of the same circular form but rather larger than dwelling huts—together with a small more or less circular enclosure, called *ludi*, neatly fenced with millet stalks. The huts are particularly well thatched, and the apex of the roof terminates in an ostrich egg from which there projects the blade of a spear, while the surrounding fence is kept in notably good repair. These huts, with the enclosed area, are sacred, for, with the exception of the priests of Nyakang and the old people concerned in keeping them clean, no one may enter the enclosure or even approach it without due cause. In 1910 the Akurwa shrine consisted of two huts, that at Fenikang of five, and these shrines, designed on the plan of a Shilluk homestead (with, however, the addition of the *ludi*), are so built because they are regarded as the homes of Nyakang.

The attendants and priests of the royal grave shrines and the cenotaph shrines of Nyakang are known as *bareth* (lit. "king's wife"). This term includes certain old men, who appear to have an hereditary connection with the shrine (but on this matter we are unable to be precise), ex-wives of kings, who having borne a reasonable number of children [1] or attained the menopause are sent to take charge of shrines, and men and women of advanced years who are liable to more or less epileptiform attacks, held to indicate possession by Nyakang or a dead king. The *bareth* keep the shrine clean, receive the sacrifices,

[1] Hofmayr states that the royal wives do not commonly bear more than three children; after this they are sent to a shrine and become *bareth* (op. cit., 140).

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the men rose and each made a short speech, to which Aker answered; these speeches were appeals to Nyakang not to let the millet suffer from the ravages of the birds. When all had spoken, Awejok, brother's son to Ayurial, stroked the bull's flank with a spear and then thrust it into the beast. Immediately he ran with the spear to the khor to wash it. The wound was oblique and only a few inches deep. The bull was now guided into the enclosure of the shrine, where it was stabbed again with another spear and led into the enclosure of Kwayo while Aker and the chiefs remained just outside. The groans of the dying bull were heard for some time. The chiefs now followed into the courtyard of Kwayo but we do not know whether any of them entered the hut. The flesh of the sacrifice was divided and eaten subsequently by Aker and the men of Golobogu and Pameiti. A band of warriors in full dress bearing their spears now returned to the dancing-ground, danced once round the sacred enclosure, then knelt down and clapped their hands and went silently away. We were told that the spear used to kill the bull was one presented specially by the king; had one of the original spears of Nyakang been used no one could have eaten the flesh of the bull and survived.

It must be noted that before the ceremony we were told that Ayurial was the hereditary bull slayer, but his paternal nephew certainly thrust the first spear; we did not ascertain whether he or Ayurial finally killed and cut up the beast. Probably the matter was of little consequence, as Ayurial was old and Awejok would succeed him. Before the ceremony we were also told that the beast would be stabbed outside the fence but would enter the shrine before dying, and this was so. The sacred character of the spears was a matter of importance; the large spear referred to above was kept sheathed throughout the ceremony until used to stab the bull, thus emphasizing its sacred quality.

So much for what we saw. We were told that the spear would be washed in the holy water kept in the hut Kwayo and that after this it would be taken to the river to be washed. The right forelimb of the bull would be cut off and shown round the village—we believe that this went to Ayuriel—the rest of the beast was Nyakang's and would be taken to Aker's home, there to be eaten by the old men.

Our description of the worship of Nyakang may conclude with a short account of his appearance in animal form, as well as some reference to the cult of his mother Nikaiya, almost as much crocodile

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

776 as woman.[1] Certain of the Shilluk kings, i.e. particular incarnations
● 775 of Nyakang, tend to be identified with particular species of animals.
825 Nyakang, Dag, and Nyadwai all appear as a white bird called *okak*, or, rarely, as a giraffe; if the animal comes straight towards the village in which the shrine stands, exhibiting no sign of fear, it is concluded that it is a spirit animal, and the attendants at the tomb sacrifice a sheep, or perhaps even a bullock. Father Banholzer adds "long-bodied grasshoppers" and "a kind of snake called *red*" as forms in which Nyakang appears. Dr. Lambie of the American Mission informed us that unusual behaviour on the part of almost any land animal would lead the Shilluk to look upon the creature as a temporary incarnation of Nyakang, adding that unusual behaviour on the part of a water animal would be put down to the animal incarnating the spirit of Nikaiya (Nyakai); so "if a little bird flies into the midst of a crowd of people and is not frightened, or attracts someone's notice in a special manner, they say 'Nyakang'". Occasionally Nyakang appears as a bull; in 1910 a very old Shilluk of the royal family said that in his youth, fifty or more years earlier, Nyakang appeared as a white bull, when the king ordered sacrifices to be made in addition to those already offered by the local chief.

We may add an experience of our own. Yur Adodit takes the form of an insect called *akwan* (Ar. *gamal en nebi*), which appears to be the larval form of one of the *Mantidae*; we only discovered this important belief by the fortunate accident of an *akwan* settling upon our camera while we were making inquiries near the grave shrine of Yur Adodit, which was being repaired. We were about to examine the insect when we were told by Col, whom we had been questioning, not to touch it. The *jago*, with his face showing the greatest pleasure, took the insect in his hands and reverentially carried it to the shrine, only the base of which had been built up, and deposited it on a leafy branch which was thrust into the ground in the centre of the shrine, i.e. over the grave of Yur Adodit. Col told us that the appearance of Yur Adodit in his animal form showed that he was favourably disposed to us and was not displeased at our inquiries concerning the shrine, and after this incident it was distinctly easier to obtain

[[7] 773] [1] According to an account, perhaps of Anuak origin or at least showing Anuak influence, collected by the Rev. J. K. Griffin on the Sobat river, Nikaiya is physically part human part crocodile. In the beginning Juok created a great white cow, Deung Adok, who came up out of the Nile. She gave birth to a man child, whose grandchild, Ukwa, married two sisters, of whom one, Nikaiya, or Nyakai, the lower part of whose body was that of a crocodile, brought forth Nyakang, who inherited his mother's saurian attributes (*The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, 1906, 197).

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

information from Col and his people. According to Banholzer (quoted by Hofmayr)[1] the praying mantis is regarded as the messenger of Nyakang, so it seems likely that our undetermined insect was a larval mantis.

We may here refer to the special regard paid to trees growing near the shrines of dead kings, which we consider yet another aspect of the cult of Nyakang. This esteem is not remarkable, for the Shilluk country is in the main bare, with few shady trees, so that any tree growing in or on the outskirts of a village is preserved and the ground becomes to some extent a meeting and squatting place. But the Shilluk attitude appears to be something more than an appreciation of their grateful shade, though we could discover no regular cult. When a tree has grown, or is believed to have grown, near a shrine shortly after its erection, i.e. within a few months or years of the burial of a "divine king", it is thought that the tree has sprung from one of the logs used in making the grave, and in such cases the relation between the tree and the dead king is one that would easily suggest itself.[2]

Possession by the spirits of Nyakang and other Shilluk kings, i.e. conditions of dissociation attributed to these, will be considered when discussing medicine-men, especially the good medicine-man (*ajuago*).

The Shilluk attitude towards the crocodile is naturally influenced by the belief in the saurian attributes of the ancestors of Nyakang, and especially of his mother. The crocodile is generally spared, as some of the worst man-eaters are believed to be men whom other crocodiles have taken, and very dark coloured crocodiles are said to be either man-crocodiles or their descendants. Moreover Nikaiya lives in the river, and is definitely associated with the crocodile, and, though she may assume human form and at times come to the village by night in all friendliness, she may seize a man or a woman and bear him or her off to her home in the river and there change her

[1] Op. cit., 51.

[2] As an instance we may cite an old tree at Kodok whose stump was standing in 1910 near the grave of Nyadwai, the twelfth king; if anyone had burned the wood of this tree, even accidentally, he would have sickened, and when the tree fell its fragments were collected and carried to the river, just as are the bones of certain sacrifices. There was in 1910 no shrine over the grave of Nyadwai, probably because it is situated some little distance from the present native village and is surrounded by Government offices and houses, but it had a fence round it, and a young tree that had appeared at some distance from the stump of the old tree was regarded with respect. The old tree did not really spring from the grave of Nyadwai, since it was admitted that during his lifetime it stood near his house and that he would often sit under it; nevertheless, there is a general feeling that it is associated with his grave, and this feeling is so strong that many Shilluk at one time or another spoke of Nyadwai being buried under the tree, though his grave must be nearly a hundred yards away.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

victim into a crocodile to be a spouse to one of her crocodile relatives. Yet Nikaiya brings luck to those whom she visits by night to ask for fire; if a barren woman bears a child after such a visit it will be called Nikaiya, and the father will kill a sheep and throw it into the river. Nikaiya is known by her short stout figure and great muscular development, and by the fact that she "eats" (mouths) her words. That the river is the true home of Nikaiya is shown by the manner of sacrificing to her; for as a sacrifice would be made at the shrine of Nyakang, or at the grave shrine of any Shilluk king, if Nyakang or one of the kings had appeared in a dream—or if a king had "possessed" a man causing him to become ill—so when Nikaiya becomes immanent sacrifice is made by throwing a live sheep, with its legs bound, into the river.

Hofmayr states that the *bareth* may divine that a new-born infant has been sent by Nikaiya; if a boy it will then be called Nikaiyo, if a girl Nikaiya.[1] When such a child grows up and becomes betrothed an offering must be made to Nikaiya as part of the wedding ceremony. The couple go to the river, where the *bareth* slaughters a male black and white sheep, smears the young people with the contents of the stomach, and fastens the ear-lobes with beads on to the feet of the bride. Beer, tobacco, earth, and parts of the sacrifice are thrown into the river for Nikaiya, and the betrothed bathe in the river. They are then conducted by the *bareth* to a house prepared for them in the bride's village, and must remain there for three or four days.[2]

There is a limited cult of the Dinka god, Dengdit, perhaps confined to the southern part of the country. Fig. 2 of Pl. IX represents a shrine to Dengdit in Odong hamlet, not far from Fenikang, and we both saw and heard of other instances. The example figured is, as far as we could determine, unlike any Shilluk shrine and was said to be of Dinka pattern. The present incumbent took over the shrine at the death of his grandmother, a Dinka woman, who had been possessed by Dengdit to whom she erected the shrine. The iron bracelets shown in the photograph have all been brought by Shilluk, who visit the shrine in considerable numbers. No doubt the possession of the present incumbent resembles the Shilluk possession by their *ror* (kings).

We should also mention the spirits of the bush and river, i.e. creatures resembling mankind in form but with non-human functions

[1] Op. cit., 277. [2] Hofmayr, op. cit., 291.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 796 homestead, and is speared by an *ororo* after the king has marked it with a spear, or perhaps made passes over it, the beast being dragged away to fall probably outside the shrine of Nyakang.

This brings the installation proper to an end, and the king, waited on by the *nya kwer*, enters the homestead, where he should remain [775] some ten days in solemn communion with Nyakang whose spirit he now incarnates.

On the tenth night the king is taken by the *ororo* to his rebuilt "palace" on the mound Aturwic, and lives there for a month in retirement. When he comes down from the mound there is again a sham fight, in which he vanquishes his opponent, and he is now the acknowledged king.[1] A beast is sacrificed, and the chiefs present make oration on the rights and duties of the ruler, each emphasizing his words by brandishing his spear and thrusting it into the ground at the close of his speech. The king replies, promises to be a just ruler, to punish wrong and to protect the weak, and dismisses his people after exhorting them to remain true to Nyakang and to their ancient customs.

The three newly built huts which were occupied by the king are broken down (perhaps by the *ororo*) and their fragments thrown into the river.

We believe that the installation of a new *reth* generally takes place about the middle of the dry season. It was said that the Akurwa party and "Nyakang" stay at Fashoda for some time, until about the beginning of the rains. On leaving Fashoda a bullock is sacrificed, and a sheep is killed before crossing every khor on the way back. On arriving at Akurwa four or five of the cattle presented by the *reth* are sacrificed, and the bones thrown into the river.

771 The third element in the Shilluk religion is the cult of ancestors (other than those of the royal family). We confess that we feel unable to set this forth in due proportion and perspective. For [171] while it is certainly true to say that the ancestral cult is overshadowed by the cult of Nyakang, and that if it ever existed in any such form and degree as among the Dinka it is now but a remnant of what it [781] once was, yet we are convinced that there is very much more feeling for and fear of dead ancestors than appears on the surface. We have

[1] Papit, the present king, left his temporary homestead on the third night and came down from his palace on the mound the next morning. For a rather confused account of what happened then, given to Mr. Munro by an Egyptian officer—not apparently himself an eye-witness—see Mr. Munro's article (our Appendix) already quoted.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

We have already referred to *pan Juok* (p. 75), the country of the dead, to be reached after long wandering in the bush, but there is also a chthonic element in Shilluk ancestor worship; the spirit persists in or round the grave and may harm its living relatives, e.g. the death of a missionary's wife shortly after that of her husband was attributed to the ghost of the latter, while Hofmayr quotes a remark of the chief Yangjok to the effect that evil comes on man from below.[1] Again, the Shilluk undoubtedly fear the *cen*, the malevolent element that persists after the death of one who has died in hatred of friends or relatives, though here again the belief does not seem to bulk as largely as among the Acholi.

Offerings and sacrifice may be made to ancestors, but in our limited experience we have met with no instance that could certainly be dissociated from the cult of the royal ancestors or in which the ancestral spirits were not confused with or associated with Juok. It is true that Hofmayr describes offerings to ancestors[2] but his descriptions, taken for the most part from notes of colleagues, are not very convincing, as there is nothing to show that the cult of Nyakang or his descendants was specifically excluded. On the other hand he cites two short chants[3] which may be regarded as evidence of prayer to the ancestors:—

tere kwaje mayegen
"The people entreat their mothers (ancestors)."
tere kwaje tiengen
"The people entreat their people (their dead)."

A hæmorrhage followed by sudden death is called "the spears of the dead", i.e. the victim has been stabbed by a ghostly weapon, but the Shilluk expression, *tong tieng pa Juok*, seems to bring Juok into the matter. A more definite relation to ancestral spirits is seen in a note by Banholtzer, quoted by Hofmayr,[4] to the effect that warriors obtained the services of an *ajuago* to invoke their ancestors, that the spirits of the slain may be harmless. A sheep is killed and part of the viscera placed in a pot and buried as an offering to those in the underworld.[5]

[1] Op. cit., 230. [2] Op. cit., 229. [3] Op. cit., 230. [4] Loc. cit.
[5] Oyler records that many Shilluk "take an offering of the first fruits to the grave of an ancestor, usually the father. . . . The grain is made into a sort of batter and poured out on the grave. The man then says that he has given his father a taste" ("Nikawng's place in the Shilluk Religion": *S.N. & R.*, i, 1918, 286). But in another passage Oyler clearly shows an association of the ancestral spirit with Juok (for we assume that "God" is a translation of "Juok"): ". . . When prayer is to be offered to the spirit of a dead person, a female sheep is brought to the grave. If the person making the prayer is not the son of the

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

is cured, and at the same time the burning out the eyes of the sheep is a type of what will happen to the person who cast the spell. His eyes will waste away. If the eyes of the person who cast the spell do not become inflamed, the cure does not take effect."[1]

The power of the *ajuago* is due to the immanence of the spirits of the early Shilluk kings. The guardians of the shrine of Nyakang might or might not be *ajuago*; they do not become *ajuago* because of their connection with the shrine, nor does their being *ajuago* alter their official position. According to our most reliable informant, only the spirits of Nyakang, Dag, and Boc (the first, third, and seventh of the Shilluk kings) become immanent in men to make them *ajuago*. When a man first becomes *ajuago* he becomes ill, perhaps waking, trembling and agitated, from a dream (in which he may afterwards say the spirit came to him). He consults an *ajuago*, who may tell him, "No, you are not ill, you have the spirit of Dag within you." A long and complicated ceremony is then performed in order that the spirit may not affect him too severely, for without this ceremony the spirit would be unduly strong in his body. We could not discover with certainty the exact nature of the change effected by the ceremony, but it seemed to us that our informant, one Akon Acol, who had in him the spirit of Dag, considered that the spirit, which had previously attacked his body in the rudest fashion, became attached rather to his spirit or soul. The ancestral spirit of any one king may be immanent in many *ajuago* at the same time, often passing at the death of an *ajuago*—or shortly afterwards—into one of his children, who thus becomes an *ajuago*. The power is frequently hereditary, and we know of one instance where a man waited for years for possession by Dag as his mother had been possessed, the condition coming finally as the result of a dream in which he saw a flame of supreme brightness; on waking he had the conviction that Dag was now immanent, and thereupon built the spirit-hut of which we reproduce a drawing (Fig. 9). The reality of the power is practically tested by the success of the would-be *ajuago* in effecting cures; if he fails, especially in his early cases, it will be recognized that he is not truly possessed.

We have recorded elsewhere—noting that our information was unconfirmed—the statement that female *ajuago* should not marry but might have lovers, and that according to our authority (unchecked) the husband of married *ajuago* would have access to their

[1] Rev. D. S. Oyler, "The Shilluk's Belief in the Evil Eye," *S.N. & R.*, ii, 1919, 125.

2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

The Shilluk idea of the spiritual make-up of man is neither simple nor easy to understand. Every living man has both *wei* and *tipo*, the former signifying "breath", "life", the latter "shadow", "image", as in water or mirror. We have already referred to the *can* of one dying in anger and malevolence (p. 97), and there is a word *anaka*, meaning ghost, i.e. the spirit of one dead. So far we are reasonably certain of our facts, but there may be an element called *winyo* (lit. bird) of whose functions we can predicate nothing.

No death occurred in the villages we visited whilst we were among the Shilluk.

According to Hofmayr, death may be hastened when there is much suffering or if the agony is long drawn out. He states that a prolonged period of immobility of the body is taken for death; the women immediately begin to wail, the dying man is declared dead, his face is covered with a cloth, and the grave is dug.[1] Burial is at full length, a few paces from the door of the house in which the deceased lived. The grave is dug by old men, mostly relatives. A skin is placed in the grave and the body laid upon it wrapped in a white cloth (this is a recent introduction) and covered with another skin. The position of the hands is uncertain; we were told that they were laid between the knees, and also that they were placed in front of the face. Nothing is buried with the corpse, but later a hole is made near and objects placed in it.

Westermann's text, from which the following account is taken, is of special interest as it contains minute details of Shilluk behaviour; it is, however, too long for inclusion and we give only the salient features. It should be noted that his description applies to rich and important men; with a single exception the graves that we saw had no cattle horns on them, and we believe that for a poor man cattle are not always killed. The use of a bier is not invariable:—

When a man dies two fowls are killed, one being placed at the head of the deceased. An ox and a goat are also sacrificed. Beads are tied round the ankles of the men who prepare the grave:—

"The man is buried thus: Some men dig the hole, and some men skin the ox [or in the early part of the account] . . . the hide is cut into strips, and a bier is [made] . . ., his wife is called, she is to hold the feet of the dead man, and the man is laid on the bier. His wife (or: the women belonging

[1] Op. cit., 199.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

1773 a third wife, whose eldest child, a son, was called Dwut (*Dwɔ̱t*). The name *Dimg* also occurs as that of a son of Okwa, but I could not make out who his mother was. Nyikang was in form partly a man, and partly a crocodile.

[The exact pronunciation of Nyikang is *Ńĵikkí*, but the final *g* is often omitted: *Ńĵikkí*; the form *Ńikkí* also occurs; in older literature the name is written Nyakam, Nyakom. *Ńĵikkí* is a composition from *nĵí*, the "son" and *Kikíg*, which is probably a proper name; thus *Ńĵikkíg* means: "son of *Kikíg*." The name *Kikíg* occurs also in *Okikíg*, which is composed from *O* and *Kikíg* and means "descendant of *Kikíg*". *Okikíg* is another name designating the Shilluk people. But about *Kikíg* the traditions, as far as they are known, say nothing. — Frequently Nyikang is simply called *rĵí* "king".]

1776 *Nyakayo (Nakíyg)*, the mother of Nyikang, exists up to the present time. NYAKAO, THE MOTHER OF NYIKANG
1775 Her residing place is about the junction of the Sobat and the White Nile. This is remarkable, as according to the tradition she did not emigrate with her son Nyikang, and yet does not now live in her original place, but in the Shilluk country. She sometimes appears from out the river, generally in the form of a crocodile, but at times in other forms. No worship or sacrifices are offered to her, but when a man or animal is taken by a crocodile, this is attributed to *Nakíyg*. When she does this, the people must not complain; it is rather an honour, when she takes her sacrifice from a village.

695 In dubious judicial cases Nyakayo is resorted to as judge. The accused one is tied in a river, and a goat is bound and laid on the river-bank near by. This latter is done to allure a crocodile. If the accused one is taken by the crocodile (i. e. by Nyakayo), he was guilty. But not infrequently the delinquent, from fear of being devoured by the crocodile, confesses his crime.

1773 Between Nyikang and one of his brothers, probably Dwut, there arose a quarrel after their father's death; according to some, about who should follow the father in the chieftainship, others say it was a quarrel about cattle. As they did not come to an agreement, Nyikang together with *Ongí*, his brother, and his half-brother *Jo* (and his three sisters), left the country,[1] seeking for a new abode; when he started, *Dwɔ̱t* threw a digging stick after him, wherewith to dig the ground (or to bury the dead). Several tribes whom he met on his way, joined him, thus increasing the band of his followers. Nyikang settled about the mouth of the Sobat, and here founded the kingdom of the Shilluks. To increase the population of his new foundation, he changed animals and fabulous beings whom he found in the place, into men, built villages for them, and made them his subjects. NYIKANG'S EMIGRATION

While residing in the Shilluk country, Nyikang fought many wars, among NYIKANG'S END

[1] "migrating village and flying away to the mouth of the Sobat", A. H. S.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

others one against the son and his son; vide page 159.

When he felt his end approaching, he assembled all the chiefs of his kingdom for a splendid festival. While all were merry, suddenly a great wind arose, and scattered all those present. In this moment Nyikang took a cloth, wound it tightly round his neck, and thus choked himself.[1]

But many Shilluks firmly believe that Nyikang is still alive. The Rev. Oyler writes to me: "When I asked how Nyikang died, they were filled with amazement at my ignorance and stoutly maintained that he never died. If he *dies*, all the Shilluks will die. He, *Dâk*, and five other kings ascended to heaven, where Nyikang prays for the Shilluks (!). They say that he disappeared as the wind".

HOW NYIKANG IS ADORED.

Nyikang is the ancestor of the Shilluk nation and the founder of the Shilluk dynasty. He is worshipped, sacrifices and prayers are offered to him; he may be said to be lifted to the rank of a demi-god, though they never forget that he has been a real man. He is expressly designated as "little" in comparison with God.

In almost every village there is a little hut dedicated to Nyikang, or to some other ancient king. In form it is like the common houses, but much smaller and more slender. On its walls sometimes rough drawings in white, red, and black colour are seen, consisting simply in line-ornaments or representing animals. These drawings are made by women, with white, red and black earth, and are renewed every year before the chief prayers are offered. These huts are commonly called *kyt rîg* "place of the king" i. e. of Nyikang. Besides these small huts they have a number of greater temples, which are in form like the Shilluk-hut, but of much larger size. They are found in most of the villages devoted to Nyikang. These "sacred villages" are, Akurower, Wau,[2] Fuzyikang, Nyikodo (*Nyikôk*), *Ogôn*, Nyidwal, *Ookbry*, *Obyn*, *Dâdyn*. These houses, the small as well as the larger, are the places where Nyikang is worshipped. In them, at least in some, a number of reliques are preserved, which are considered holy and are held in great veneration. Among these are a statue of Nyikang made of ambach-wood; the holy spear, drum, and shield of Nyikang, a digging stick, ancient metal ornaments and clothes, etc. Spoils from wars are also dedicated to Nyikang, and are preserved in the temples.

In times of need, when sickness or war are threatening, but above all when rain does not come in due time, the people assemble round the house of Nyikang and pray to him. This is done by dancing and at the same time singing prayers. At the beginning of the rainy season, when they are about to plant dura, the regular chief prayers take place; on this occasion an animal is slain as a sacrifice to Nyikang. Before the transaction of any serious business the elders of the village assemble around the temple of Nyikang, to ask for his counsel.

[1] Till the subjugation of the Shilluks by the British all succeeding Shilluk kings have finished their lives by the same form of death.

[2] This Wau is not the place in the Bahr Ghazal Province, but is situated on the left bank of the White Nile between Tonkâm and Kodok.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 F323 Shilluk F323

756 791 793 [754]

a man by witchcraft, to prevent rain, and to cause the cattle to be barren. — There exist two kinds of sorcerers, the one whose functions are just mentioned, who plays an important and mostly beneficient rôle in public life and the official religion of the community, and another one whose doings are secret and who works for mischief. If this latter is convicted of his evil doings, he may be severely fined, or even sentenced to death. — Besides these the word *jal pəŋ* "man of medicine" is sometimes used; whether this is a synonym to *ajidjo*, or whether it designates still a third class of "witch"-, or ordinary "doctor", I do not know.

When possessed by a spirit (or by *Jwok*?) the sorcerers become ecstatic; ECSTASY 781
the same seems to be the case with a newly elected king; here it seems to be the spirit of Nyikang, which falls on his followers, vide page 149.

The texts contain many mythological tales and allusions, which may in former MYTHOLOGY 773
times have formed part of the strictly religious belief of the people, but exist now merely as historical traditions, without having any active meaning to the present generation; this domain of their mental life is, however, not sufficiently known as yet to allow a decisive judgment. A reminiscence of ox-service is evident from 55, page 166. The Nile and Sobat are populated by water-people, who in figure are partly like men, partly like crocodiles or fish. They had, in the past, many intercourse with men. — According to some older writers the spirits of the Nile are worshipped. They have their own cattle-herds, which live with them in and on the banks of the Nile. They often dive up from the water, chiefly in misty weather. When a cow is fished out of the river, it is placed under the protection of the Nile-spirits and the sun-god[1].

The Shilluks have two expressions which may be translated by "soul" or SOUL, SPIRIT 774
"spirit" of a living person: *wei* and *kiŋ*; *wei* means "breath", and is the life-giving factor in man; the meaning of *kiŋ* is "shadow" of a man, or "image", as seen when looking into clear, still water. — The spirit of a dead person is called *anyiŋ*; the word is derived from *nyiŋ* to kill; *anyiŋ* probably means "one who kills", or "who is killed". The *anyiŋ* is feared.

On the abode of deceased persons the Shilluks have but vague ideas; in one ABODE OF THE DECEASED 775
of the texts the dead are called "the people of the village of God", *jì yè jwok*. Whether they have a general belief in a life after death, is not known.

Islam does up to now not find much sympathy with the Shilluks. They ISLAM 777
prefer their own religion to that of foreigners. Only a few people who have for a longer time lived in close touch with Mohammedans, chiefly those who have served as soldiers, adopt the religion of Mohammed, or at least wear Mohammedan amulets besides their own charms. It is admirable that these people, Shilluks, Dinkas *Anywaks*, and Nuers, though having lived for centuries side 771 747

[1] This doubtlessly relates to the cows of Nyikang, vide the preceding.

614
585
644

nyireth and their descendants continue to live near those of the *nyireth* as a fictitious lineage.

The Colo

585
614

The *colo* consists of the main body of Shilluk clans, of which there are about a hundred. They are patrilineal clans tracing descent from the original followers of Nyikang, and also from those who have since migrated into and settled in Shillukland or were in occupation when the Shilluk immigrants arrived under Nyikang's leadership. Their origins are obscured in myth.

The *colo* clans like the *kwareth* are patrilineal and exogamous and marriage occurs between them. The difference is that the *kwareth*, through their connection with the founder of the present Shilluk regime and their ritual importance to the people as a whole, are treated with special respect and have special privileges.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL ORGANISATION

The Reth

643
[173]
[175]

The Shilluk people recognise one supreme head, the *reth*, who represents the country as a whole, regardless of territorial, social or kinship divisions. According to Shilluk tradition the present *reth* is thirty-first of the royal line which began with Nyikang, who led the Shilluk into their territory, conquered it, and established the social order. The spirit of Nyikang is thought to reside in every *reth* and to be passed from one to another down the line of his successors.(1)

The Settlement Chief

622
643

The settlement chief is traditionally directly responsible to the *reth* and executes his orders. He has certain religious obligations to the *reth*, such as building a house at Fashoda or maintaining the local shrine of Nyikang. The chief settles disputes in his territory, endeavours to keep order and harmony and to lead in community matters. He is selected by the lineage heads of the settlement and not by the *reth* who merely recognises his authority and position by investing him with the *lau*, personally knotting this robe over the *jago*'s shoulder.

The Headman of the Hamlet

643
622

The *jal dwong pur* has a status which varies according to whether he is headman of the principal hamlet of a lineage - in which case he is also a representative of his lineage within the settlement - or whether he is the headman of a subsidiary hamlet, in which case he is hamlet headman only and merely the senior member of a group of homesteads. The headman of a principal hamlet often receives a *lau*, sometimes directly from the *reth*, in other cases from the settlement chief. This, however, is only in confirmation and recognition of his status and there is no question of appointment by the *reth* or the *jago*. The headman of a principal hamlet represents

(1) Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, p.9.

It would appear, therefore, that in judicial and administrative matters the Shilluk *reth* is far from being an over-riding or autocratic political authority. Local chiefs seem to be free to follow their own traditional courses without much interference. In actual powers of government and administration, and in personal prerogative, the *reth* may be little more than a mediator in disputes and perhaps the balancing force which decides a quarrel one way or another. It is in ritual matters that his real positions and powers are indicated.

THE RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RETH

Evans-Pritchard writes: "Both his functions and his status are primarily of a ritual order. He makes sacrifices on important occasions, especially for rain and for victory in war, and it is his duty to provide cattle for the sacred herds of Nyikang at Nyilual and Wau and a cow for Nyikang's shrine at Nyibudho.[1]

It is noticeable that everywhere there is the closest connection between the political structure and the religious cult.

(a) The territorial segments and their association with certain dominant lineages are explained in terms of the myth of Nyikang's division of the country among his followers who became the founding ancestors of many of the Shilluk clans.

(b) The lineage heads who are chiefs of settlements have ritual duties to the kingship. They perform ceremonial services at the time of the *reth's* investiture, are responsible for building huts in Fashoda and for the upkeep of Nyikang's shrines and those of past *reths*. The tombs of the dead kings are indistinguishable from the shrines of Nyikang and have the same ceremonial importance in rain-making ceremonies, harvest rituals and so forth.

(c) The traditional customs of the people and the organization of society in every way are considered to be the work of Nyikang directly or acting in the line of *reths*.

(d) The identification of Nyikang with the king is the central point of the Shilluk political, ritual and moral system. The people believe that Nyikang reigns and manifests himself in the *reth*. Nyikang is also the medium between the Shilluk and *Juok* - their chief spirit. The Shilluk consider the *reth* to be in close communication with the spirit forces of life, and Nyikang is the connecting link, participating in *Juok* as he does in the *reth*.[2]

The *reth* is considered to come under the category of Divine Kings, as described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*. This is clear from the mode of his death and succession as well as from the duties he performs during his lifetime.

Succession of the Reth

Only the son of a *reth* who has reigned is eligible, and a younger may

[1] Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk*, 1948, pp. 1-17.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

made at all times of stress and misfortune. Everything round a shrine is sacred, especially trees - they are particularly rare in Shillukland in my case.

Certain Shilluk kings, particular incarnations of Nyikang, tend to be identified with particular species of animals. If such an animal approaches the shrine without signs of fear, it is assumed to be the form in which Nyikang appears, and a sacrifice is offered at the shrine. Almost any unusual behaviour on the part of an animal would lead the Shilluk to look on it as a temporary incarnation of Nyikang. Nyikang's mother, Nikaive, is reputed to have been a crocodile and is believed to live in the river in that form. A sacrifice is made to her by throwing a live sheep into the river. The crocodile is generally spared even though these creatures are a danger in river crossings.

There is a limited cult of the Dinka spirit Dengnit, and also a belief in the spirits of the bush and river.

THE CULT OF THE ANCESTORS

Beliefs concerning the ancestral spirits are vague. Reference is made to *pun juut*, 'the country of the dead', which is reached by the spirit after long wandering through the bush, but it is also believed that the spirit persists in or around the grave. Offerings and sacrifices are made to the ancestral spirits by the head of a household or local lineage on behalf of the descendants. If there is sickness or misfortune or the possibility of danger, a person will pray to his ancestors and make an animal sacrifice to propitiate them.

The ancestral cult seems, however, to be overshadowed by the national cult of Nyikang and the royal ancestors.

TOTEMIC BELIEFS

Seligman suggests that Shilluk totemism may have been derived from the Dinka because it seems so slight and unimportant. According to Hofmayr and Westermann the clans appear to have totems and some clans derive themselves from an animal or fish which Nyikang took and turned into people in order to populate the country. Hofmayr states that totem animals are often killed but it is considered wrong to eat them.(1) Most totems are animals but a few are plants. Children inherit their totems from their fathers; a woman keeps hers even when she is married.(2)

MAGICAL PRACTICES

The Rainmaker (*Ajwogo*)

Ajwogo means 'man of Juok'. Such people are regarded as possessing certain magical powers which they use for the good of the community. People go to them when they are in need of help and pay them for their assistance. The powers of the *ajwogo* are believed to be due to their

(1) Hofmayr, *Die Schilluk*, 1925, p.231.
(2) *Ibid.*

In addition, the

Shilluk believe in ran which is thought to be the malevolent element that persists after the death of one who has died with a grievance and is angry at some wrong that has been done to him.(1) They also speak of winyo, meaning a bird, but Seligman was unable to discover what this meant.

A dead body is buried at full length, a few paces from the door of the house in which the deceased lived. The grave is usually dug by elderly male relatives. The body is wrapped in skins, and sacrifices of oxen, goats and fowls are made after the burial, according to the family wealth. The mourners bathe in the river; no food taboos are laid on them but they shave their heads and do not wear ornaments or go to dances during the period of mourning. After a month has passed the mortuary ceremonies are held, a number of sacrifices are made and beer is brewed for the mortuary feast. According to Westermann the horns of an ox are often placed on the grave.(2)

THE ANUAK

Detailed information on the Anuak is derived almost entirely from two articles by Evans-Pritchard.

ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

The Anuak are, like the Shilluk, a riverain people and their villages are distributed along the banks of rivers in the Eastern Sudan and in Ethiopia. In the western regions of Anuakland the ecological conditions are somewhat different from those in the east. The western areas are true savannah, flat, almost treeless grassland, which is flooded in the wet season. In the east there is forest savannah which gradually turns into tropical rain forest. In the rainy season the western half of Anuakland is cut off from the eastern half by deep water-courses and swamps. These factors have had considerable repercussions on the political organisation of the country and largely determine the distribution of the villages and the economy.

In the savannah areas of the west, villages are built on rising ground at the edge of the flood plains and the occupants may have to move during the rainy season for fishing, fresh pastures and for drinking water. Villages built some miles back from the river (owing to flooding during the rains), also have to move. For such villages there is a wet-season village site and a dry-season village site. The regions in the west are thinly populated; small independent villages are strung out 5-20 miles apart and often with swamps and rivers in between so that in the wet season a village community may be completely cut off from the rest of the country for several months. In certain localities, as along the Gila river, villages are surrounded by dense beds of reeds and it is impossible to reach them except by the few paths available. Such villages are very difficult to attack. Where the villages of the savannah areas are not protected by these banks of reeds they are, or were in the past, protected by stockades and moats, the homesteads being closely wedged together owing to the lack of space on the mound occupied.

(1) Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, p.97.
(2) Westermann, *The Shilluk People*, 1912, p.113.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the smaller units which they comprise. Such a logical model would be misleading for the interpretation of the significance of the moieties, Gol Nyikang and Gol Dhiang. These seem to function primarily, if not exclusively, in the election of the Shilluk kings, successors to Nyikang. In the election of 1943–4, of which we have a full description,[1] the two leaders of the religious moieties had first to reach agreement upon the successor of the dead king, and their choice was confirmed by a representative of the king's clan, which is not identified with either moiety. An electoral college, representing various settlements of Shilluk-land, then confirmed the choice, which, according to Shilluk custom, had to be one of the princes whose father had already been king. In this case the choice was very limited, and the electoral college at once accepted the proposal made by the leaders of Gol Nyikang and Gol Dhiang. Disagreement between these over the choice of the king is said to have led to fighting between the moieties in the past, and thus to civil war in Shilluk-land.

The division of the kingdom into Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang thus becomes effective at the election of the king, and the preliminaries to the installation of the new king do indeed create the division which Nyikang, the king's ancestor, is said to have created in the past.[2] When the leaders of the moieties have reached agreement, there is still a ceremonial opposition between them until the king has actually been installed, when the moieties are again put together in a single kingdom, the kingdom which Nyikang originally united under himself. The Shilluk kings conceive their country as a unity by dividing it into moieties, which separate and then unite, over the election of the king. The theme of the resolution of duality and separateness, perhaps an idea paralleled by that of crossing from one bank to another of the river, in order to make a unity consciously recognized by the Shilluk, may also be seen in other features of the installation ceremonies of 1943. The Shilluk king must be possessed by, or identified with, Nyikang, so that some writers say that he 'incarnates' Nyikang. At the installation ceremonies an effigy of Nyikang is brought from northern Shilluk-land, where Nyikang is said to have disappeared during a dance.[3] There is a mock fight between this effigy, accompanied by the effigies of Dak and Cal, and the king-elect. In this fight the king first retreats from the effigy, is then captured by it, and finally must seize from it a small girl, who plays an important part in the ceremonies. She appears to represent the wife of the king's office and, since the king is to take the place of Nyikang, who represents that office, he must also take the wife. Hostility between the king-

[1] The election may have been considerably modified by European and earlier rule, and the element of election by vote may have been stressed at the expense of a rather different principle, described below (p. 157).

[2] Howell and Thomson, 1946, p. 30. Pumphrey (1941) quotes a story in which the existence of Gol Dhiang, which may well be of later foundation than Gol Nyikang, is attributed to a later Shilluk king, but it is still a king who made it. This seems to refer to an earlier stage in the evolution of the kingship. Here we speak of the kingdom as it was at the election of 1943.

[3] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 45.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

judge, for, as the source of both good and evil, he can be regarded as indifferent, or friendly, or hostile, according to the judgement of the individual in any particular situation. His existence is taken for granted, and what people know or think of him does not alter nor define nor limit him. It is suggested by Hofmayr that the idea of punishment for wrong done is connected rather with the dissatisfied dead and with the ancestors than with the direct action of God. It is they who bring it about that God punishes the guilty.[1] Such beliefs are accompanied with very little elaboration of ideas about the state of the dead. Stories about the land of the dead, where all is quiet, as it is in the Shilluk capital of Fashoda, seem to represent fancies rather than traditionally formulated beliefs. The dead are in some sense nearer to God than are the living for they exist increasingly in a world of ideas, as the impressions they left upon their descendants become fainter with the passage of time; but, as another Shilluk proverb says, 'man does not think about death'. They pray that they may be helped in this life.

Association of Nyikang with Light and Knowledge

Mention was made earlier of a contest between Dak and Dimo, in which Dak struck his opponents blind, until they accepted his superiority, when he restored their sight. The same story is sometimes told of Nyikang and Duwat.[2] Since Nyikang and Dak represent the way in which the Shilluk know the order of their world, as well as being themselves examples of knowledge and intelligence, it is appropriate that the power to blind people should be attributed to them in myth. Another myth tells how Nyikang, in order to capture some sorcerers for his country, covered the earth with a shadow so that they could not see anything.[3] This association of Nyikang with seeing and light, and thus, I suggest, with knowledge and understanding, occurs again in the belief that Nyikang sometimes shows himself in dreams as a bright light;[4] he appears also, among other forms, as a white bull. Dak and other kings appear also in the form of a white egret. The logic of this symbolism is not specifically examined in the literature, but in Shilluk thought there seems to be some association between light and sight, and Nyikang and the kings. In the installation ceremonies of 1943, we are told that 'all objects of great sanctity were covered in white cloth . . . with all cattle [for sacrifice] it was evident how careful the Shilluk were to see that the animal was blindfold'.[5] At the conclusion of the sacrifices which marked the stages towards the complete installation of the king, then representing Nyikang, these wrappings were torn off. The significance of this may be partly that such objects, which are holy, are also dangerous to ordinary men who must be protected from them. In the installation ceremonies, the Shilluk fled when they supposed that Nyikang had come, and again fled from the effigy of Dak, with 'a mixture of fear and laughter'.[6] One

[1] Ibid., p. 832.
[2] Westermann, 1912, p. 168.
[3] Howell and Thomson, 1946 p. 78.
[4] Oyler, 1918, (i), p. 108.
[5] Seligman, 1932, p. 76.
[6] Ibid., p. 26.

8:Howell E-4.6 (1937, 1948) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

tant among the Nuer and Dinka, does not usually arise. The Shilluk seem to attach greater significance to physical paternity than do other Nilotes and the *okeijo* male will usually be linked to the name of his *genitor*, even though this carries with it no legal rights. In the case of males there is often a tendency on the part of the maternal uncle or his heirs to deny to the *okeijo* rights of inheritance or full participation in the reciprocal privileges of the lineage, so that his status is sometimes precarious and indeterminate.

Unlike the Nuer and Dinka, the Shilluk have no 'Ghost-Marriage'.[1] It is not stated as a fundamental obligation of kinship that a wife should be 'married to the name' of a dead kinsman, though the sentiment which dictates the custom among the Nuer and Dinka is not absent among the Shilluk. In this sense the Nuer and Dinka system is perhaps more individual than that of the Shilluk. Among the Shilluk continuity of the kinship group, not of the individual, is assured by normal legal marriage with cattle which might well have been used by the deceased for this purpose, but are not transferred in his name. Names are retained, however, by a belief in reincarnation. It is believed that the spirit of some ancestor appears in the new-born child which is then named after the ancestor. At the birth of every child a ceremony is performed, usually with the assistance of a *bay reth* who specializes in such matters, to determine this. The participants will ask, '*mun akal yi min*?—'This one is brought by whom?' This accounts for the repetition of names in Shilluk genealogies, irrespective of sex, since there is no reason why the spirit of a female ancestor should not enter a male child or vice versa.

As will be seen later, a man who seduces a girl, if she subsequently gives birth to a child, cannot assume legal parenthood of his offspring except by marrying the mother and then only if at least some of the bridewealth cattle have been transferred, and the initial processes of marriage performed before the child is born. Theoretically, at least, children born out of wedlock cannot be legitimized and must therefore remain *okeijo*. This does not apply if the father is betrothed to the girl at the time, provided that he eventually completes the marriage payments. It often happens, however, that a child born in these circumstances is adopted by the man who subsequently marries the mother, and marriage in these conditions usually brings with it legal parenthood of children born out of wedlock.

Violation of Rights in Women

Seduction of Unmarried or Betrothed Girls and Adultery

The seduction of unmarried girls is accounted a serious wrong among the Shilluk and one which demands compensation. The wrong is referred to as *kwor kwob nien ajur* and compensation is assessed, both currently and traditionally, at one ox. Pumphrey remarks that,

> . . . an original seduction often eventuates in marriage, in which case the seduction payment is payable first and the marriage payment after (and over and above it). In such cases also marriage dates from the acceptance of the sheep and it is improbable that the girl's family will accept it until the seduction payment is completed.[2]

[1] See Evans-Pritchard: 'Some Aspects of Marriage and the Family among the Nuer', *Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, 1938 and Rhodes-Livingstone Inst. 1948.

[2] Pumphrey: unpublished records.

643 776 of his followers. The Shilluk do not say that Nyikang died or passed away, but say -as my informants told me- he was angry with his people, and, in a stormy night, was gone. This assumption is necessary for the conception of Shilluk kingship. The idea may be summarized thus:

1. Every king who rules the Shilluk is an incarnation of Nyikang,
2. as the soul of Nyikang is thus incarnated in the body of the king, it would suffer every kind of weakness the body suffers;
3. as this would mean the loss of the protective and guiding spirit of the whole nation, it was necessary that the kings should not be left to die of old age;
4. and thus came what we term the ritual killing of the king.

171 Among the Fung, we have no such idea about kings, and the post of kingship itself. This is due to the fact that the Fung were Moslems, and as it is implied in Islam, there is only One God, and there is no possibility of incarnation, or such would be a return to paganistic practices. No one who wrote about the Fung kings ever hinted at the existence of such an idea. Thus, one of the conditions of divine kingship, indeed the core of this kind of kingship, is lacking among the Fung.

b) The Mode of Accession to the Throne:

643 It is easy to understand the Shilluk notion of incarnation from the way they apply it. The important feature which dominates the installation ceremonies of Shilluk kings is the seating of the king-elect on a special stool brought for the occasion from the Shrine of Nyikang at Akurwa. At first, the wooden effigy of Nyikang is placed on the stool by a priest, symbolizing that Nyikang himself is sitting on the stool; then the effigy is removed and the king is seated. In this way, the [776] soul of Nyikang takes possession of the body of the new king. And after this ceremony, the king is considered a king.

Another important rite in a king's installation is that a king must pass a month in complete seclusion before going to Fashoda for the seating ceremony, and another ten days in a special place called Aturwie in Fashoda after the seating ceremony. In this time, the king is considered to be in a solemn mood of contemplation, and in communication with his great grandfather, Nyikang, and other ancestors. During this time of seclusion, the king is provided with a girl, who is given to him by a special clan. It was the custom that the king would marry this girl afterwards, but now it is according to his wish. Human sacrifices at the installation ceremony are said to be given up now, but they were practised in the past. 88)

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88) In former times, it was usual that the king would pass over a bounded old man as he marches towards Fashoda, and the multitude of the Shilluk followers of the king would also tread on this man, and naturally he dies. Now a sheep and bull are used instead of the man. See Seligmann, p. 94, and Howell, p. 196.

13: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

The man, who had been sick leans upon his staff as he walks. They then return to the house of the patient in the same way, and usually a fee is given the medicine man, and he says: "I have mine now, you will not be sick again". The patient then discards his staff, and early the next morning he goes to work again.

The witch doctor claims the power to kill a person by casting a charm on him, but for such a service he exacts a very heavy fee, as the risk to the witch doctor is considerable. The spirit of the departed is liable to return, and make war on the medicine man, and in the end kill him. It is necessary for the medine man to outwit the spirit of the departed and that is accomplished by killing a chicken. The dead chicken is placed in an earthen vessel, and it is buried in the road with the bottom of the vessel up, and protruding out of the ground. This device brings protection in two ways. First every person passing the vessel is liable to carry away a bit of the curse, and in the second place the chicken has a spirit, which is greatly displeased at being killed, and it immediately decides that it is due to the departed that death was inflicted on it, and so it makes war on the spirit of the departed, and the poor shade gets so busy defending himself against the shade of the chicken that it has no opportunity to return to inflict punishment on the medicine man. Every medicine man, who passes the vessel taps it with his club. He thinks that in that way some of the power of the medicine man who put the vessel in the road will be given to him. After the death of the victim the medicine man also demands a sheep from his client, so that he can sacrifice it to help to appease the spirit of the departed.

When a village is going into a fight it is very convenient to know before, who will be killed. They have at least two ways of learning this. By one method two spears are stuck in the earth. They are connected at the top by a string, and another string passes between them at the bottom. All the fighting men bearing their weapons, must pass between the spears, and if a man or his weapons touch either the spears or the string he will be killed in the fight. The second method is by the gourd of God. Many of the more successful witch doctors have a gourd of God. It is a gourd with a handle upon which is an iron band. The gourd is greased, and in it is put some grain. When the gourd is shaken

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Thus of the present thirteen division chiefs only four hold traditional offices the others being government appointees over units based upon these rather vague confederacies. Though the four high chiefs do still possess an enhanced prestige their position is approximating rapidly to that of their less hallowed colleagues. This evolution to a more local form of government is a natural consequence of the inevitable lessening of the old autocratic power of the Rethship.

The impermanence of these confederacies is shown by a comparison between their composition in the Mahdia and their composition to-day (shown in Appendix IV), as also by the recent removal of the settlements of Mal and Abiangyei from Atodwoi Division to that of Detwok.

THE RETHSHIP.

The power of the *Reths* before Turkish interference was undoubtedly great. It was based partly on the semi-divinity with which tribal tradition clothes them and partly upon their great wealth in cattle and slaves. Justice was probably rough and large scale fighting more prevalent than litigation, such law suits as there were being seen, as previously mentioned, either by the settlement chief or by the *Reth* at Fashoda[29].

As well as wielding temporal power the *Reth* has always been the high priest of the tribal religion. Nyikang is mediator between God (*Juok*) and man, and each *Reth* is held to be a reincarnation of Nyikang. As high priest he has various obligations such as providing cattle for the sacred herds at Nyilual and Wau and providing a canoe for use at the shrine of Nyibodho (one of the Shilluk holy places).

Since the entry of the present Government the *Reth* has lost the means of acquiring wealth in cattle and is no longer allowed to have retainers of the traditional sort. He receives a substantial salary but this cannot purchase many cattle and his present comparative poverty has caused an inevitable decline in his temporal and spiritual prestige. The Rethship is living on its not inexhaustible store of divinity and the wonder is that the store has lasted so well.

29. The *Reth* is said to have had the enviable privilege of killing a tiresome litigant with a club.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

similar to that of the Nuer and Dinka. They have, however, an established and theoretically omnipotent monarchy, of which there is no counterpart among their more democratic Nilotic neighbours, and which shows more definite and developed principles than those found in the institution of kings among the Anuak and chiefs among the Acholi. Whether this established and institutionalized monarchy is the result of diffusion from elsewhere or a natural and spontaneous development from the politico-religious functionaries who exist in embryo form among other Shilluk-speaking peoples is a controversial subject, which we do not propose to discuss here.[4]

Shilluk religion and the tradition of Nyikang.

The all-powerful being who exists in the minds of the Shilluk as a remote and amoral diety is called Juok. Juok is the Shilluk conception of God and is present to a greater or lesser degree in all things. Juok is the explanation of the unknown, the reassuring justification of all the supernatural phenomena, good or bad, of which life is made up. The principal medium through whom Juok is approached is Nyikang. The distinction between them is not clear. Nyikang is Juok, but Juok is not Nyikang, for Nyikang is also a mythological figure who takes his place as the hero-leader of Shilluk tradition. He is also the first *reth* of the Shilluk and the founder of the royal house. Further the soul of Nyikang is reincarnate in every Shilluk *reth*, and thus exists both in the past and the present Nyikang is the *reth*, but the *reth* is not Nyikang. This paradox of the unity yet separation of the three is not easy to define. The Shilluk themselves would find it difficult to explain. Juok, Nyikang, and the *reth* represent the line through whom divinity runs, a conception which may be expressed as an analogy to the ancestor cult, only the cult is symbolic of the tribe as a whole rather than of the Kwareth alone or other individual kinship groups. The *reth* is clearly himself the medium through whom both Nyikang and, more vaguely, Juok are approached, and is the human intercessor of mankind with God. Voluntarily by

4. See C. G. Seligman, *Egypt and Negro Africa*. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd. (1934), p. 60.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

1. Since the well-being of the Shilluk tribe depends so necessarily on the very existence of the *reth* and every action he takes, the death of a *reth* and the installation of a successor must be most carefully regulated by ritual and religious observances. 643

2. The occasion demands strict observance of all the rites and ceremonies necessary to carry the tribe no less than their figure-head from one status to another A false step will cause disaster to the tribe

3. The period of the interregnum is one of intense danger for the Shilluk tribe. Spiritually it is dangerous, because there is no human symbol of tribal cohesion. The *reth* is "out of status"; the whole tribe is in a like position. The soul of Nyikang is without a home. The newly appointed *reth* will later incarnate the spirit of Nyikang, but he does not yet possess fully the divine attributes which have the effect among his people of stabilizing his position To the Shilluk the political situation also is full of potential danger because civil war may break out at any moment over the choice of a successor Even after the new *reth* has been appointed by the traditional college of chiefs, his life is endangered and every effort must be made to safeguard him [775] [669]

4. Therefore each stage in the burial and installation ceremonies successfully concluded is yet another crisis passed. Emotional tension is manifest throughout—a rise and fall of political and religious feeling until the final climax is reached when the new *reth* is confirmed in his position by the homage of the temporal heads of the country Although the Sudan Government did not intervene either in the choice of the new *reth* or in the form or timing of the events, the Shilluk knew well enough that no bloodshed would be tolerated. How much greater then must [781] [648]

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 782 to be for the Kwanyikang to drink. The preliminaries were then complete for the forging of the spears to be used in the installation. They numbered about fifty.

778 643 [173] [775] The Shilluk say that Nyikang disappeared in a whirlwind, and since then Akurwa has been a place of especial sanctity. Nyikang is liable to re-appear at any time, in a variety of different forms and at any place in Shilluk country, but since Akurwa was the scene of his departure, it is also the most likely place for his return. There are many shrines of Nyikang in Shilluk country, but Akurwa is by far the most important and it is there that the effigies of Nyikang and Dak are kept. These effigies are not merely symbols. They may "become active" at any time, and when active they are Nyikang and Dak. The effigy of Nyikang is rarely taken on a journey in normal times, though it is often brought out to dance during religious festivals at Akurwa itself. The effigy of Dak makes periodical excursions through the country. Both effigies have an important part 643 775 778 to play in the ceremonies of installation. The soul of Nyikang is manifest in the effigy for the occasion, and he must march from Akurwa to Fashoda to test the qualities of his new successor and to install him at the capital. This march, the opposition shown by the *reth* and the final ritual performed at Fashoda are the essence of the installation ceremonies. The symbolic substitution on the sacred stools[13] of the *reth*-elect for the effigy is the principal method by which the soul of Nyikang is transferred.

The Progress of Nyikang from Akurwa to Nyigir.

643 778 As the time of the installation drew near, it was plain that there had been some delay. Nyikang was expected to arrive at Fashoda by the new moon of February 24th 1944. But as the old moon waned there were nothing but rumours that he had started and others that he had not. This was worrying to those around the *reth*, for tradition has it that if Nyikang disapproves of the *reth* he may become too heavy

13. Described in Part III, pp. 61 ff.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 [778] the public gaze, and the ox-hides upon which it is placed, had already been brought out and set up at the entrance of the shrine, and the stool itself, heavily swathed in white cloth, was hurriedly carried out. Behind stood a Shilluk holding the fish-spear of Dak, which was also wrapped in white cloth. The party escorted by the Kwa Nyikwom with Dak well to the fore then moved up to the canopy, and the effigy of Nyikang was set upon the stool, while the *reth* knelt down and clasped the legs on the north side. The chief of Kwa Nyikwom knelt down and clasped the legs on the other side, and *nyakwer* seated herself to one side of the *reth*. After a long period of much chanting but no visible movement, the effigy of Nyikang was lifted from the stool and hurried into the shrine immediately followed by Dak, and the new *reth* took his place upon the sacred stool of the Shilluk, facing the crowd, but still well screened by the canopy. The place of the *reth* holding the stool for Nyikang was now taken by the *jal tyel kwom reth* (chamberlain). It was not possible to follow all the ceremonial which followed. The party was screened on three sides by the canopy, and the *reth* himself was surrounded by functionaries. The *reth* himself, seated on the stool but screened by the canopy, was facing the crowd, and the chamberlain and another Shilluk knelt on either side to hold the legs of the stool, while *nyakwer* was sitting on the ground to his left. In front was held the sacred spear of Nyikang, which had accompanied the *reth* from Debalo. The majority of the crowd had already dispersed and either took no further interest in the procedure or were not allowed to do so, and those who were watching close at hand were for the most part Kwareth, Ororo, or the attendants of Nyikang. Nevertheless this was the crisis of the ceremonies. The act of substitution upon the stool symbolizes to the Shilluk the possession of the *reth* by the spirit of Nyikang, and we saw that the *reth* was seized with a trembling fit at the critical moment, and certainly he appeared to be in a dazed condition immediately afterwards, when he walked across to the temporary camp opposite the shrine.

[778]

After sitting on the stool for about twenty minutes, facing the people, still screened by the canopy, the *reth* arose and escorted by the chief of the Kwa Nyikwom, who held his right hand, and by *nyakwer*,

20: Thomson G-5 (1945-1946) 1948 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 The next day December 30th, *Adul*, the temporary camp outside Fashoda, was built by Jago Yorleiker. This time he built both huts, and the chief of Gol Dhiang had no part.

On the 31st the *reth* and Nyikang were ready for the installation ceremonies. Nyikang and his army left Nyigir at about 9.00 a.m. and went straight to the village north of Fashoda, where they had to wait some two hours for the *reth* to start from Debalo. The army of Nyikang moved steadily this time and seldom turned back in countermarch as it had done in 1944. The *reth* was delayed ceremonially till about midday. His form of procession was similar to 1944, and the cattle which were bride-wealth for Nyakwer were observed being driven along beside his army.

There had been an abnormal White Nile flood in 1946, as in 1917 at the time of the installation of *reth* Fafiti, and the Khor Arepajur, which was dry in March 1944, was now an expanse of water about 200 yards wide. When the *reth* arrived at the khor, the *Golbainy* dragged the small black bull to the southern bank. The *reth*, taking Nyakwer by the hand, stepped over the bull and into a canoe. He was paddled across the khor with Nyakwer sitting behind him, while his followers forded the stream.

As the two parties of Nyikang and the *reth* approached each other Nyikang dashed forward and captured the *reth* without a struggle and began at once to carry him off to Cerfuc (op. cit. p.p. 61 & 78) Fashoda. This corresponded with Munro's observation in 1918 (*Sudan Notes & Records* Vol. I), but not with what we had seen in 114 643 669 541 in 1944, when there had been a spectacular mock battle with millet-stalks. I was told that they had "made a mistake" in 1944, and also that owing to the hardness of the millet stalks they were afraid of injuring someone. This latter reason had not cancelled the fight in 1944. There is another possible reason: the *reth* himself was feeling in a state of acute personal danger, owing, as he thought, to the likelihood of someone making an attack on his life. He may have issued orders at the last moment that the battle was not to take place, in case someone should take advantage of the confusion to attack him. This seems more possible because the *reth's* army were all carrying millet stalks as they crossed the khor, as if in preparation for the mock battle.

643 The rest of the ceremonies closely followed precedent. *Reth* Dak, while enthroned on the stool was "possessed" by Nyikang, in the [795] same way as *reth* Anei had been. He was afterwards led away to seclusion in *Adul* leading Nyakwer by the hand. An incident which [783] may be of interest occurred while the *reth* was being led to *Adul*. The

20: Thomson G-5 (1945-1946) 1948 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

of his throne, the spirit of the divine Nyikang, which had been as it were in suspension since the last *reth* Anei Kur had passed over a year ago, had entered into Dak Fadiet, and once again the Shilluk people could resume their normal life.

NOTES.

1. *The body of Nyikang.*

It was explained in our previous article that the body of Nyikang consisted of a bundle of bamboos brought from the Nuba Mountains. I now believe that this is not the case and that only Dak's body is of bamboo. It is more likely that the bundle is of ambatch, indeed this is generally believed. The Shilluk believe that the soul of a mortal can pass into a stick of ambatch, and I am informed by Dr. J. A. Heasty that if a Shilluk dies away from his home his relatives hold a ceremony to make his soul pass into a stick of ambatch, which they take back to his village and bury there.

2. *The vigil of the Beads 'Ocoro,' which are tied on to the reth's ankle.*

I interviewed the old *nyireth* who is responsible for these beads. She was reluctant to tell me much, and refused to show me the beads. I asked her, for she had great experience of these matters, how it came that some beads appeared with holes in them, and she told me that as she sat over them at night the ones which appear with holes went 'pop.' She told me that four had appeared with holes for *reth* Fafiti in 1918, and one for *reth* Anei and five for *reth* Dak. She said four or five were about right, one was too few, and more than five was too many. The beads with holes are tied on to the *reth's* ankle only during the ceremonies, and after that they apparently close up.

3. *Nyakwer.*

It was not clear in 1944 what became of Nyakwer. It now appeared that she became *bareth*, i.e. will become a wife of the *reth* when she grows up. The girl who was Nyakwer in 1944 still lives in Fashoda, and is now about 13 years old. There was of course a different girl in 1948.

4. *Fashoda.*

The sacred village of Fashoda was most beautifully cleaned and repaired for the installation. All the houses had had their fences renewed, and courtyards replastered with mud, though none of them was rebuilt. The whole of the mound on which the royal shrine of

22: Howell E-5 (1951) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the flight of the *reth*-elect to Debalo where he remains in seclusion while the warriors of the south (*gol* Nyikang) gather to his aid; the gathering of the host of Nyikang supported by the warriors of the north (*gol* Dhiang); the *reth's* march against Nyikang, the mock battle and his defeat and capture by Nyikang; his substitution for Nyikang on the royal stool and his possession by the spirit of Nyikang; his purification and seclusion in a temporary camp outside the capital; his vigil in the sacred mound of Aturwic; a further battle with Nyikang and the establishment of peace between them, and finally, after these important ritual events are over, a public ceremony in which the chiefs of the country publicly declare their allegiance while exhorting him to perform his duties justly.

Each event in this procedure is a further step towards the transference of the soul of Nyikang from the dead *reth* to his successor, which has always been an essential feature of the Shilluk monarchy. Each stage in the burial and installation ceremonies is another crisis passed, for until the substitution has been made, the Shilluk people are in a condition of extreme spiritual danger as well as of actual political danger since at any time civil war may break out over the choice of the new *reth*. This is manifest throughout.

The *reth*-elect, who was chosen by the electoral college shortly after the death of his predecessor, is Kur, son of Fafiti *wad* Yor who was *reth* of the Shilluk from 1917 until 1943. At the time of writing the installation ceremonies are not yet completed and we are here concerned only with the death and burial of *reth* Dak *wad* Fadiet. We must remember, however, that these ceremonies are part of a whole chain of events designed to achieve the safe and successful transference of the spirit of Nyikang from the old *reth* to the new and to bring back to the tribe its former stability.

reth Dak *wad* Fadiet died in Malakal on the evening of May 8th, 1951. His death was not unexpected since he had been ailing for some time and under treatment in hospital for advanced tuberculosis. He was attended personally in hospital by a medical dresser who was also his nephew, and his wives and followers were to some extent excluded from direct contact with him. There was an intense atmosphere of potential danger to his life and a feeling that he would be despatched by his wives before he died a natural death, for it was widely known that he was seriously ill, but I believe that this derived mainly from the medical dresser himself, who, acting in an entirely untraditional capacity, sought to stress the conventional attitudes demanded of him. At any rate there is no evidence that he was put to death or even "assisted to die." [1]

[1] See Howell & Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 11 and p. 19, and Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

533 destroyed, Yor son of Nyidhongo, the country is ruined," is one of the main
539 refrains of the song of Yor. Other songs refer to the immortality of their
766 reths. Of Dak, son of Nyikang, we hear that he only vanished, he did not die.
[778] Of Kwaikon, who was killed in battle against the Dervishes at Jebel Gadir,
[178] they sing, *Kurjang* (Kwaikon) *cie kwy abei tho nyinang kardi tho wadi nini*, "Kurjang the fierce one, when he went out to die he did not fear, fierce one, death is only sleeping."

766 Warriors from the surrounding settlement of Fanyidwai Pac then entered
in battle order, carrying their shields and spears. After a preliminary march
[576] round the arena, spears and shields were discarded and only sticks and millet stalks carried. This is usual at Shilluk public ceremonies. Dances continued for three days, men of Fanyikang, Dernin, Fakang and Malshal attended and the procedure was not different. Over two hundred and eighty oxen were slaughtered for the occasion, the tails and some of the horns being hung on the fence surrounding the tomb, while the meat was consumed by the participants.

[783] On the final day, after a great show of dancing and further sacrifices, the ceremony of purification known as *dango* (or *Yal*) took place. The *bangwik*, *nyirwik* and also many other kinsmen of the late *reth* were conducted by the *ocwo* into the centre of the village, where an ox was sacrificed while they sat round in the centre. According to strict Shilluk custom, this should have
[777 been followed by a general shaving of heads. In fact, they did not do so,
302] possibly because the ritual bathing in the river was considered sufficient purification. No satisfactory explanation for this deviation from custom was forthcoming. It is worth mentioning also that the *okak mum*, latrine, and the *bilo* (or *gol pi*) bath place, of the late *reth*, which are attached to the *gol dwong* and used by him in the past, were fenced off and guarded. Anyone approaching them was mined by the *ocwo* and made to pay a small forfeit.

643 The *reth*-elect, *Kur wad Fabi*, was present on the first day of the move,
766 as a gesture of respect to his predecessor, for it is not necessary for the new *reth* to be there and he never appears in public. In particular he may not see the relics of Nyikang carried by the *kwa Nyikir*, for these are associated with the death and burial of a *reth*, not with the living.

766 The *kwa Nyikir* then set out for Debwor where a similar ceremony was
also to be held for the northern Shilluk. I was not myself present and am indebted to Mr. J. L. Baker for the following account.

"On November 21st, the *ocwo* and *kwa* Nyikir had returned to Fashoda for the final act in the obsequies of *reth* Dak and arrived there after several days spent on the road. At about 4 p.m., as at Kojo where the actual bodily

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

I have assumed in the reader some knowledge of these accounts, for the observations which are recorded here are not part of a full and detailed description, but of a note intended to amplify previous records.

Although the spirit of Nyikang may appear almost anywhere in Shilluk country and in the numerous shrines which are found there, I think it is safe to assume that, where the new *reth* is concerned, Nyikang disappears at the time of the actual burial of the late *reth*. His spirit appears again in the effigy which is kept at Akurwa, the most important shrine in the country, and remains there pending the final ceremonies of the installation. Until the obsequies of his predecessor are completed, the *reth*-elect is not finally accepted, though he must follow the rules laid down by tradition and must avoid pollution. Theoretically, though this no longer holds true with the administration of the present government, his position may at any time be challenged by a rival and civil war might follow. After the old *reth* has been buried, though the danger from rivals is always present, he has to face the spirit of Nyikang and to undergo the trials to which Nyikang will subject him before he is accepted as a worthy successor and is himself possessed by the spirit. Actual physical danger from other claimants, the danger of an uprising against him, which is never entirely absent throughout his reign, is at its peak, but wanes as each stage is successfully passed. All this is expressed by the conventional attitudes displayed by him and his people and in the ordeals he must undergo. Thus, though there may be no real danger of armed conflict, the situation demands that these conventions be followed and throughout there is an atmosphere of insecurity.

We are here concerned with the election and installation of Kur *wad* Fadiet. As the son of a *reth* who ruled the Shilluk for so long and so successfully[1] and coming immediately after two *reths* whose reigns were short and by no means universally popular, Kur was a likely candidate and it was generally accepted that one of the house of Fadiet was the obvious choice. The Electoral College of chiefs sat at Fashoda immediately after the body of Dak *wad* Fadiet had been interred in the hut at Debowr. Mr. J. L. Baker, who was present, describes the procedure as follows:

"On the 13th May, 1951, the Electoral College sat without further delay as the chiefs wanted a new *reth* quickly owing to the approach of the rains. Also the issue was pretty clear from the outset as, apart from one or two chiefs in Gollwiny, the Shilluk were solidly in favour of *nyireth* Kur—a man known to me as a very well-behaved and dignified type, from Bapi behind Kodok. The College on this occasion was ten strong (no Tonga people had arrived, but this was not considered important). The following sat:

1. *jago* Yorkiker (Got Dhiang)
2. *jago* Thabo (Got Nyikang)
3. *kwanyireth* Cayo (*jang kwareth*)[2]

[1] There were occasional conspiracies against Fadiet, notably that of Nyawelo and Kur in 1931. See Pumphrey, M. E. C., *The Shilluk Tribe*, S.N.R. Vol. 24 p. 5.

[2] *Jago jang kwareth*, lit. "the chief of the chiefs of the *kwareth*." The title was apparently given to this branch of the royal house by *reth* Nyakwac.

24: Howell E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

The march of the armies and the mock battle

After three nights in seclusion in Debaio, during which his followers are mustering from the south, the *reth* is challenged by Nyikang to come forth to fight and messengers are sent for this purpose. Accompanied by *Nyakwer*, "the girl of the ceremonies," who plays an important part in subsequent events, by various relics of Nyikang, by his shield and spear-bearers and his army, the *reth* marches on the capital, crossing Arreyjor on the way, and attacks the army of Nyikang by then drawn up just west of Fashoda. In this battle he is defeated, captured by Nyikang and carried off to the shrine of Nyikang (*Corfuc*) nearby.

The substitution on the sacred stool

In front of this shrine the sacred stool of Shilluk kings, the *kwom*, is set shrouded from the public by a canopy of white cloth. Nyikang is placed upon this, but after a time is whisked away and the *reth* takes his place. This act of substitution and enthronement, perhaps the most significant act of all the ceremonies, is the point where the *reth* is possessed by the spirit of Nyikang.

The temporary camp

Shortly after this the *reth* is carried to a temporary camp (*Abul*), where, after a sacrifice, he is washed and purified. He remains there in strict seclusion, guarded by the *orore*.

The vigil in Akurwic

On the next evening, he ascends into *Akurwic*†, the imposing mound which dominates the capital and on which are four well-built houses. It is said that he is enticed there by a woman of the *orore*, leaving *Nyakwer* behind, forgotten and neglected. After two nights, word is brought to him that Nyikang has seized her on the grounds that she has been married with cattle from the royal herd: there are his, Nyikang's property, not that of a man who has not yet been confirmed in his position as *reth*.

The final struggle with Nyikang

Challenged, the *reth* comes down from the mound with his followers, while Nyikang moves forward to attack him right in the centre of Fashoda. In a furious battle which follows, the *reth* succeeds in wresting *Nyakwer* from Nyikang and retires into *Akurwic* once more. Shortly afterwards, Nyikang ascends the mound and makes his peace with the *reth* and there follows a ceremonial inspection of the houses of the capital and fines are imposed on those clans who have not fulfilled their obligation to repair them. The *reth* has now been accepted by Nyikang whose official and public functions are over. Later he retires again to Akurwa.

Speech Day

On the final day, the chiefs of the tributary *nyamtic* below the mound and the *reth*, accompanied by his drummer and shield-bearer, come down to meet them. Each chief in turn addresses the *reth* and, after declaring his allegiance, exhort him to do his duty and to treat his people justly. The *reth* is then conducted again round the houses of Fashoda over which he now has complete control.

In this brief summary, I have drawn attention only to the most important features of the installation. There is naturally a wealth of ritual carried out at each stage of the ceremonies. From the accounts of the [illegible] of Reth Dak in 1946, we have a clear picture of the slow and colourful process by which a *reth* is chosen and installed. Each stage has its religious and secular aspects and in the short description of the installation of *reth* Kur and Fadzi which follows, it will be

† Variously spelt: *Akurwic*, *Arkudowic*, *Arkurwic*.

25: Anonymous 1-5 (no date) 1956 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 When the Reth's army begins to move out to meet Nyikango's, all the people of Debuło run away clapping the handles of their spears, meaning that the Reth will never return to Debuło until he dies. As he goes out a bull is laid down on his path, whereupon he walks over it in front of the procession, pulling another bull by the tail. The latter is covered with white cloths and is meant to reach Fashoda, being dragged in this manner—Fashoda is about two and a half miles from Debuło. The spear from the shrine at Bol and another from Lul are also brought for the coronation ceremony.

Now scouts are sent to see if Nyikango's army is approaching and to report the news back to the Reth. In the Reth's army the people carry some short sticks representing spears with which they fight with the army of Nyikango by throwing them. The members of Nyikango's army carry long thongs of twisted grass which they use as whips to disperse the Reth's army, so that they will leave the Reth in their hands to be taken by the spirit of Nyikango. The whips are filled with the spirit and the people are frightened by them, as being touched by the whip is enough to produce madness unless gifts are offered to Nyikango's people. Princes are not allowed to go near the Reth during the procession, because if the Reth is killed by any of them during the coronation procession from Debuło to Fashoda the coronation is not postponed, but the people at once seize a nearby Prince, or the prince who killed him, to replace the slain Nyireth—he is not yet Reth, as he has not been possessed by the spirit of Nyikango—and the coronation continues. Because of this danger during the procession the Reth has to be protected by his policemen and the senior chiefs, who keep the ordinary people away from him.

[753 828] [644] [664]

According to the custom, when the Reth's army reaches the dry khor called Acebajur near Fashoda, which is the boundary between the two parties, a black bull is laid down. The Reth boldly walks over the bull and across to the other side to meet the party of Nyikango. As soon as they come near each other the two armies begin to fight, throwing short sticks at each other. At that moment the Reth is seized from his army by the people of Nyikango and clothed with the spirit of Nyikango. Here Nyikango's army are busy sending people away with their whips so as to leave the Reth with the group of performers of the ceremony. After this he is taken to a round cleared place and circulated four times there before entering Fashoda. As this is done he is escorted to Fashoda by two lady maidens with the image of Nyikango on his shoulder. These two maidens are taken from the performers of the coronation and later become wives to the new Reth.

[644]

In Fashoda he is taken in front of the Nyikango's shrine and placed on a silver coronation seat covered with white cloths, and the image of Nyikango and Dak are held over him in order that he might be possessed of their powers. With him are his sub-chief and the chief of Kwanyiyek holding the legs of the Reth as he is sitting on the seat. He remains in an open place for some time, with the group holding some white cloths as a shelter around him. Meanwhile Nyikango's army beat their drums and sing Nyikango's songs. Here the Reth is said to be shaken by the power of

[775]

643 233 After the performance of this, the Reth and his sub-chief are taken to one of the roughly-made huts near Nyikango's shrine, where they stay for two days, with the Reth keeping the little herd of Nyikango's cattle which was brought from Debuło. This kind of action is done so as to obtain good fortune in the future during his kingship. Here he is treated as he was in Debuło, being made to do the work of a small boy, making fires for these cows and cleaning their place. This work is done

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the chief of the district offers a sacrifice to Nikawng so that the rains may come. After the prayer has been offered, and the rain comes, if it comes with a rushing sound they say that Nikawng walks in the storm, and the rushing sound is made by his passing.

Once the departed king returned so that he could be seen by the eye of man. The first kings did not die, but ascended. At last a time came when the kings were to be identified more fully with the people, and they were to be buried. The proper burial of the first king to receive that attention from his subjects, was of such great importance that Nikawng returned to give minute instructions as to how the king should be buried. Some say that he actually appeared in the flesh. Others say that he appeared to a certain old chief in a dream, and made known to him how one of his kingly descendants should be buried.

At certain times the old woman, who has charge of his sacred house places food in it for him. At the time of new moon the food is placed in his house, and may be offered to him one day, or four days. Very early in the morning the food is taken out, and eaten by the attendants. They say that Nikawng has tasted it. Should the offering entirely disappear in the night it would be taken as a serious omen. Milk is also placed in the house with the food. Should the old woman keeper of the sacred house dream of the king during the month, she places an offering of food in his house.

Similar offerings are made to the other kings, and also they may be made to an ancestor.

When the harvest is beginning, before the people may eat of their grain they must take an offering of their first fruits to Nikawng. After Nikawng has been given his taste of the first fruits the people may eat freely. An offering of the first fruits is also taken to each of the sacred houses of the other kings.

Many of them take an offering of the first fruits to the grave of an ancestor, usually the father. When offering to a father the grain is made into a [illegible] and placed on the grave. We may then say that he has given his father a taste. The worship at the family shrine dies out when the immediate family is all gone. In the case of the kings it is kept by all the people.

The power of Nikawng is upheld to some extent by a class of religious

28: Cyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

deceipus. By some means the spirit of the king is supposed to enter into 735
people. They sometimes say that he is taken by the wind king. The spirit 736
of any of the kings who did not die may enter a person, but the greater 737
part profess to be acting for Nikawng, though Dok has a numerous following. 754
People thus possessed are said to be servants or slaves of the particular king
claiming their allegiance.

The beginning of the possession is indicated by hysteria. When a person
is first taken he walks about with his head swaying from side to side, and
his eyes shut. Often they look as though they are going to fall, but they
are always able to maintain their balance. In the night they wander about
or else ward off sleep by singing songs. When a person first shows these
signs, they send for a recognized servant of that king. The spirit is able to
tell the people what king he represents.

The servant of the king treats the case. He makes a fire, and puts a 737
vessel of oil on it. The oil is permitted to boil, and then the patient is 755
taken near the fire. A hand is put on the forehead of the person to be
treated. The person in charge of the case puts one hand on the victims
head. With the other hand he seizes his hand, and thrusts it into the
boiling oil or butter. If the patient is burned and cries out, and tries to
run away, the possession is said to be a light case, and curable. In that
case the dung of a dog is brought, and burned. The patient is then put
under a cloth, and the ashes of the dog's dung, and fire are also put under
the covering. The spirit is then said to be driven out. If that patient has a
second attack, the spirit cannot be driven off again. If the patient is not
burned by the oil, the possession is said to be complete, and measures are 754
taken to initiate him into the order of the servants of the king. Two sheep
are killed, and their skins are prepared to be worn by the patient. Beads
are fastened on the forehead, and about the ankle, and a string of ostrich
egg shell beads is put about the neck. A spear is then placed in the patient's
hand, and boiling oil or butter is placed on his forehead. The king is then
revealed by hysterical actions on the part of the new servant of the king.
[illegible] also presents of ornaments to the new servant of the king 754
and the person who had charge of the case gives him a spear. A sheep
is also given, and its right ear is cut off, and beads are fastened to it. The
ear is then worn. The servant of the king in charge of the case gets a

28: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1918 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

756 good fee. It will not be less than two sheep, a fighting spear, a fish spear, a hoe, and a cloth. The patient is then assigned to a separate house.

Both men and women are eligible to become servants of the king, but the women predominate. This ceremony does not release a woman from [542] [543] her husband, but when they become old they may wander about, and follow other men.

People who are not in sympathy with the ceremony are not readily admitted to see the performance. Some say that the hand is held in the boiling oil or butter, but others say that it is barely touched to the oil.

An indication of the fact that the power of Nikuong among the Shilluks is not as great as their professions would indicate, is furnished by comparing the servants of the king with the witch doctors. They work along the same lines, but the powers of the witch doctors are greater. The possessed are supposed to be holy, but they are among the most lustful of the people. They make greater claim to personal piety than the witch doctors, but their lives are no better.

[462] The women of this class are much more active than the men, who are usually idlers.

They are able to give protection, for when a fight is imminent one is [1216] called to sprinkle ashes on the warriors, and Nikuong is invoked thus, «Nikuong, this village has your ashes on it, do not give it to death».

[718] They are also able to foretell future events. They often profess to be surprised at their own messages, and they are able to get into communication with the dead.

The chief work of the servants of the king is to cure disease. The so-called cures are nearly always of a magical nature.

• 775 The spirit of the king may not always be active in the afflicted person, 776 but it comes and goes. When a servant of the king under the power of the 756 spirit [illegible] merely a manifestation of the king, but if he does a wrong act under the same guidance, he is held responsible.

756 The actual workings of the servants of the king are not easy to witness, as they do not like to work before a hostile gathering. The tales of their doings told by eye witnesses vary, as they are influenced by their faith or lack of faith in the power of the medium. A few illustrations may be given

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

According to the tribal mythology, Nyikang was no ordinary mortal. God, it declares, created a great white cow which came up out of the Nile and gave birth to a man child, Dhyang. His grandson Adak married a being who was half woman, half crocodile, and she became the mother of Nyikang. This affinity with the saurian inhabitants of the Nile gave Nyikang a special power over them; they came to his assistance during his great trek whenever his further passage was disputed by superior numbers, and at his command they emerged from the river, assumed human form and fought on his side until the opposition was overcome.

Mysterious was his birth; so too was Nyikang's passing from this earth. Being more than mortal, death, the lot of mortals, was not for him, but during a dance he was enveloped in a whirlwind and carried alive into Heaven. And there he reigns, not God, the great Jwok Atang, but the glorious divine intercessor with God for the Shilluk people. Nyikang is very much alive indeed to the Shilluk, for his spirit enters into every Shilluk king at his installation and dwells in him until his death.

The king, then, is the permanent manifestation of Nyikang to his people. He is their great high priest on earth; their intercessor for them with Nyikang, even as Nyikang is with God. Nay, more than that. It is conceivable that a European state could flourish and prosper under a sickly, or a mad, or a wicked king, or conversely, could weaken and decline, be its ruler a Hercules in strength and a Solon in administration. To the Shilluk, however, such a thing would be quite incomprehensible; to them the bodily and mental strength of the king exercises an influence upon the whole tribe, and upon it depends the well-being and the prosperity of the Shilluk race. Whilst he is strong and in full possession of his faculties the country will be prosperous; should his powers decline, then too will his people weaken and wane. Hence he must not be allowed to become enfeebled physically or mentally, must not be permitted to become senescent. For him there can be no question of abdication, of

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 682 669 king, that is, the son of a former king, to attempt to kill the reigning king and seize the power for himself. The king is, as it were, considered fair game for anyone who, provided he has the requisite credentials, considers himself strong enough singlehandedly to take the life and the title of his lord.

Uneasy then, indeed, is the head which wears the Shilluk crown, for the owner may wake to feel throttling fingers encircling his throat, or heavy folds of cloth muffling his face, or, should he have any reason to think that a pretender seeks his throne, may spend night after night in unwinking vigil, divested of clothes and ornaments which might betray his presence or movements, carrying a blackened spear, prowling ceaselessly around his own village, pausing where the shadows are darkest, magnifying each noise of the night and interpreting it as the stealthy approach of a marauder intent upon his life. I must confess that I have never heard of an attempt being made upon the life of the king by a would-be usurper in recent years, but it would appear that the possibility is always present, and it seems that an attempt to assassinate King Papiti was made about 1930 by a son of the deposed king, Kur. During the past ten years three Shilluk kings have died, and although there is no certainty that any one of them was violently 'assisted' to die, there is equally no certainty that he was not.

643 731 [775] Once the king is dead, either from natural causes or otherwise, a great disquietude and uneasiness settles on the country. Officially 'the land has ceased to be'; the spirit of Nyikang has lost its dwelling place and the country and the people have temporarily lost their protector. All manner of evils may fall on them; famine, pestilence, invasion, and—what comes nearer home and is always a potential danger during the interregnum—civil war may break out should any one of the nyireth who has a sufficiently strong following make a bid to seize the throne for himself. Hence, after the death of a king, the election of his successor is proceeded with as quickly as possible, but it is only with his inauguration, about a year afterwards, that the shadow of disaster is lifted and the land may be said to live again.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

weight in the deliberations of the electorate. Sometimes, too, when the final choice is a difficult one, it would seem that the selectors have recourse to augury and divination. A number of small stones, one for each candidate, is placed in a fierce fire. A stone that glows red indicates that, under the prince it represents, cattle will be plentiful in the country; a white-hot stone would presage an abundance of grain in the new rule; one glowing both white and red would entail an era of plenty both in cattle and grain, whilst that which merely blackens and bursts would unanimously be rejected.

When the decision is at last reached, one of the great chiefs goes unobtrusively and by night to the village where the king-elect is living. During the deliberations of the electorate all nyireths are required to remain in their own homes and not to approach the neighbourhood of Fashoda; this precaution is taken to ensure that no nyireth should rush the capital and usurp the power for himself. The chief challenges the nyireth to a mock battle and when he has thus given a token of his prowess and valour the news of his election is formally broken to him. He is brought quietly, again under cover of night, to Fashoda, and at daybreak inducted with ceremony into his capital. When these preliminaries are over and the reth-elect is settled in Fashoda, the news of his election is noised abroad, and chiefs and nyireths come in from all parts of the country to pay their respects to their new king. The situation has become somewhat easier now, since with the accomplished fact, there is little likelihood of an armed insurrection taking place. There is always of course the possibility of any nyireth asserting his right to the throne and proving it by slaying the king in single combat, and in former days it was customary for the king to slaughter as many of the nyireths as he could lay his hands on—a most effective method of reducing the potential danger to himself.

The period between the election and the solemn installation of the king is roughly a year. During this time the land is, as it were, dead, for the spirit of Nyikang still lacks its habitual abode, and is under interdict. No great public dances may be held, except the funeral dances for the late

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

643 642 [535] reth, no building may be done and the usual burning off of the grass in the early dry season is forbidden.

643 796 [324] [301] During this time also active preparations are on foot for the ceremonies of installation. Iron must be obtained and special ceremonial and presentation spears forged; silver, ivory and ostrich feathers procured for the making of bracelets and other ornaments; a hunting party has to make inroads (either without the knowledge or with the connivance of the government) upon a strictly protected species of antelope in order to obtain the highly prized skins which serve the purpose of purple and ermine in the installation ceremonies. The forging of the sacred spears is introduced with special ceremony; with appropriate sacrifice new fire by the immemorial method of the friction of hard wood upon soft is made and the implements of the blacksmiths blessed.

643 796 778 775 There is great activity during this period of preparation in Akurua in the north of the country, Nyikang's own sacred village. It was from here that the hero-king disappeared in a whirlwind from the sight of mortal man, and it is to Akurua that he returns in order that he may go to Fashoda to install his successor as reth. In the shrine at Akurua are housed the sacred effigies of Nyikang and his son, Dak, which are carried in procession from Akurua to Fashoda for the installation. These effigies consist of heads of ostrich feathers fixed in bamboo sockets, and are in fact fetishes, since the souls of Nyikang and Dak are believed to inhabit them. On the death of a king the old effigies are destroyed and new ones made for the installation of the reth-elect.

643 796 778 [614] When preparations at Fashoda are completed, messengers are sent to Akurua to inform Nyikang that it is time to march to Fashoda. The effigies are then carried out, borne aloft by members of a clan whose special prerogative this is, and start on the journey to the capital, a distance of about seventy miles. The procession moves south at a smart pace. Dak's mop of feathers on the end of a long bamboo pole looks like an oversized feather duster; Nyikang's head of ostrich plumes is very much bigger than that of his son's,

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

776 God is considered as being far off, aloof from mankind, caring nothing for the things He has created. Men do not [782] then approach Him directly, nor, at least on great public occasions, presume to offer sacrifice to Him. Approach to God can only be made through the great mediator, Nyikang. It is Nyikang who, though he led his people into and left them in so sorry a plight, is reverenced as the Father and Saviour of the Shilluk people, is worshipped as a demi- [775] god, and is thought of as always dwelling among them in [782] the person of the reigning king. To him are all prayers made and sacrifices offered; in his honour sacred dances are [778] performed. His numerous shrines, located in different parts of the country in which his spirit is believed to dwell, are [793] carefully tended by the Bang Reth, to whom fall the perquisites of the meat of the sacrifices and the tributes of grain willingly surrendered from a meagre harvest in the sacred name of Nyikang.

776 643 782 [789] [731] The king, as the personification, as it were, of Nyikang on earth, will offer the principal sacrifices on important occasions during the year, for example, to obtain a plentiful rainfall and a bumper harvest, for the averting of the plague of weaver birds which descend on the country in their millions each year and devour the ripening grain, in times of drought and flood, of epidemic among the people and plague which is carrying off the cattle. On these and similar occasions is Nyikang invoked and sacrifice offered to him by [634] the king himself and the district chiefs, and yet it is clearly understood by all that it is not Nyikang himself who will *bestow the benefit or avert the disaster, but God*, moved to clemency by the intercession of Nyikang for his people. And so the second and last article of the Shilluk Creed would run 'and in Nyikang, Son of God, Father of the Shilluk people, and our only intercessor with God for us'.

● 775 769 Alongside the cult of Nyikang, there is also a cult of the dead. The Shilluk have only a vague notion of life after death in the Christian sense. They do, indeed, speak of the *Pa Juok*, God's country, which is the abode of Nyikang and their ancestors, and which is reached only after months of

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

difficult and weary travel, but they are hazy as to what kind of life is led in that country and suppose it to be but a continuation of the kind of life they know on this earth. Meanwhile the spirits which have not yet started on the journey to Pa Jwok hover round their graves and former homesteads and may do harm to their living relations, and a person who has died in enmity with anyone is greatly to be feared by his late enemy. All these spirits, therefore, have to be placated by offerings and sacrifices. Someone may be taken ill and the anxious relatives call in the witch doctor to tell them which spirit is responsible for bringing this evil upon them. He consults his oracle, such as an empty calabash to which he listens intently, and then informs the people that Nyikang says such-and-such a one, recently dead, is responsible and that sacrifice and prayer must be offered to his spirit, and perhaps intercession and sacrifice is to be made at the grave of the sick person's dead father, that his spirit may prevail upon the malignant one to remove the curse from his family. Accordingly a sheep is led to the grave of the person to be placated. The right ear is cut off and washed in water and the water poured over the grave. Prayer is made both to God, Jwok-Atang (on such private occasion as this without the intercession of Nyikang), and to the dead person. Then the sheep is killed and the meat cooked. Some of the soup is poured over the grave and the meat is then eaten by those who have taken part in the sacrifice.

All former kings, and in some cases great chiefs, have their shrines. These shrines consist of two or three huts built in the usual Shilluk fashion but with much better thatching than that affected by the ordinary Shilluk and enclosed within a reed or thorn fence. As befitting the great spirit that dwells within, these shrines are kept in good repair and spotlessly clean by the duly appointed guardians. One such shrine is situated just a few hundred yards from the mission at Detwok. It consists of two large huts surrounded by a fence and is dedicated to Nyala, a woman, surprisingly enough. She was the daughter of the seventeenth